

“Serving Those Who Served”

Call 1-800-562-2308 for Statewide assistance

www.dva.wa.gov

Vol. 5 Issue 19

SPRING/SUMMER 2004

Langer On Duty at Ft. Lewis BDD

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) recently assigned a Transition Service Officer to the Fort Lewis Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) site. Walt Langer, formerly assigned to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, began serving veterans at Fort Lewis on May 3rd. Bob Wallace, national executive director of the VFW Washington, D.C. office and Bill Bradshaw, director of VFW National Veterans Services traveled to Washington State to meet with WDVA director John King and Lieutenant General Soriano, I Corps and Fort Lewis Commanding General. The visit to Fort Lewis was to both visit the Waller Hall BDD site and to meet with General Soriano to reiterate the Veterans of Foreign Wars commitment to serve our nations' soldiers as they separate from active duty service. The Fort Lewis BDD site was the first in the nation to deliver VA benefits at the time of separation from active duty and this model is now replicated at 24 military locations in the United States and abroad.

"Walt Langer is one of the VFW's finest and most experienced service officers," said Wallace. "He is the right person for this job and I am confident the soldiers at Fort Lewis will benefit from Walt's comprehensive knowledge of the VA process. He is the right man at the right time."

In addition to Langer, Mike DeMinter, a Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transition Service Officer, also provides claims assistance at the BDD site.

Walt Langer is available at the Fort Lewis BDD site weekdays from 8:00 - noon and 1:00 - 4:30 or can be reached at (253)966-1279.



Walt Langer (left) assists a soldier with the claims process.

Vet Service Network Draws National Recognition



Conference participants were trained in a number of areas aimed at improving the quality of claims submitted for Washington veterans.

Over 100 veteran service officers and trainers attended a statewide Service Officer Training Conference in Fife on March 23-25. This first-of-its-kind training for partners in the statewide Veterans Field Service Network drew service officers from 23 of the states' 39 counties and instructors from the Federal VA in Washington, DC.

Throughout the conference, service officers were trained in a number of areas aimed at improving the quality of claims submitted to the USDVA for Washington veterans to receive benefits.

Tests were administered to all participants at the beginning and ending of the conference to determine the effectiveness of the training, with service officers scoring an average of 28% higher on the final test.

"These are outstanding accomplishments, given the diverse skill levels and backgrounds of the participants," said WDVA deputy director John Lee.

"The progress made by all Washington State partners in WDVA's Field Service Network is drawing national recognition for the way claims are developed, submitted, and ultimately rated by the USDVA," continued Lee.

As a result of these changes, service officers can now track the number of claims they submit, the status of the claim and the overall outcome of the claim.

"Not only is this a valuable tracking tool, it is also beneficial in determining whether additional training or resources should be directed to a specific area," said Lee.

(Cont. on page 3)

"As a result of the combined work of the Statewide Field Service Network, veterans in Washington State receive over \$849 million in compensation and pension payments annually. These dollars enhance the economic vitality of individual veterans, and local economies."

--WDVA director John King

What's Inside...

Statewide Service Officer Training	Page 1
King elected to NCHV Board of Directors	Page 2
In Focus- TVR & NABVETS... ..	Page 4
In the Spotlight	Page 5
WA Veterans Homes Highlights	Page 6
Veteran & Military License Plate	Page 8
Meeting the needs of our newest veterans	Page 9
National Notes	Page 10
Message from Sec Principi	Page 11
Hats Off.....	Page 12

Washington State
Dept of Veterans Affairs
PO Box 41150
1011 Plum St, 2nd Floor
Olympia, WA 98504-1150

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Washington State
Department of Printing

Veteran Voices is published for Washington state veterans and their family members, WDVA employees and Veterans Home residents.

Volume 5, Issue 19
SPRING/SUMMER 2004

Governor
Gary Locke

WDVA Director
John M. King

Public Relations & Legislative Manager
Heidi Audette

Public Information Officer
Colleen Gilbert

Graphic Designer
Miriam Young

Call 1-877-VETS-R-US
(877-838-7787) for an application to the veterans homes.



Publication Information

Please submit comments, articles and address changes electronically to:
colleen@dva.wa.gov
(360) 725-2180 or
miriam@dva.wa.gov
(360) 725-2169
or mail to:
Veteran Voices
PO Box 41150 Olympia,
WA 98504.
Articles must be received by the 1st of March, June, Sept., and Dec., for consideration in the next issue.

Publication of articles is at the discretion of the **Veteran Voices** editorial board.

When credit is given to the source, articles from the **Veteran Voices** may be reprinted.

To obtain this publication in an alternative format call (360) 725-2169.

Director's Message



John M. King
WDVA Director

This Memorial Day, as our nation dedicated the National WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C., I thought not only of the spirit embodied by this Greatest Generation, but of the sacrifices they and their families have endured.

What is most striking to me is the steadfast commitment shown by these exceptional men and women who, though advancing in years, continue to embrace providing service and honor to members of our military, both past and present.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of these living heroes, Memorials stand on the Capitol Grounds in Olympia honoring the participants and veterans of World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, as well as those of World War I, the state's Medal of Honor recipients, and the countless POW/MIA's.

Memorials play a profound role in ensuring our state never forgets the sacrifices made in wartime, and this state is a leader in formally recognizing and remembering the sacrifices made by thousands of veterans in the pursuit of freedom.

On Memorial Day 1987, the Washington State Vietnam Memorial was dedicated, carrying the names of more than 1100 of our state's young men and women who would never grow old.

In July 1993, veterans of all eras gathered to make certain Washington's Korean War veterans would never be forgotten, especially the more than 500 whose lives were cut short.

On Memorial Day 1997, a plaque was added to the state's Vietnam Memorial recognizing the thousands of veterans *who made it back, but never made it home*, seven years ahead of the Nation.

On Memorial Day 1999, thousands gathered in Olympia to dedicate the state's World War II Memorial, five years ahead of the Nation, and remembering in bronze the almost 6000 residents who died for their country.

Yet, as beautiful and moving as these memorials are, the truest reflection of the heart and spirit of the state's 670,000 veterans and their family members is so much more.

From the dedicated volunteers in our own State Veterans Homes or VA Medical Centers, to the Service Officers who seek out veterans in need across the state, Washington is a state committed to "Serving Those Who Served".

WDVA was recently privileged to honor more than 300 volunteers of the Tahoma National Cemetery for their commitment to providing final honors to veterans being laid to rest. Their compassion, dedication and sense of duty touch families, friends and veterans deeply.

Washingtonians can be proud that veterans and their families are being represented and served by the finest advocates and volunteers in any state.

Anything less is simply not an option.

John King

John King, Director of Washington State Veterans Affairs, is elected to NCHV Board of Directors

John King, Director of the State of Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, has been elected to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) board of directors for a three-year term beginning July 1. He was elected on May 18 during the NCHV Annual Membership Meeting and Conference in Washington, D.C.

As state director, King oversees a department that provides services and emergency assistance for more than 670,000 veterans in Washington. Services include pension administration, home loan and educational assistance, employment programs, homeless veteran outreach, and specialized health care services for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), agent orange exposure, Persian Gulf War illnesses and ionizing radiation. His leadership facilitated the creation of the innovative Homeless Women Veterans Reintegration Project, a program that recognizes the special needs of women veterans – especially those with dependent children – who need assistance with job training and placement and finding safe, affordable housing.

Before his appointment to the top post in the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs in 1997, King served as the deputy director of the state Attorney General's Office. He is a Vice President for the National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs and will become the organization's national president in 2005.

King served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War as a weapons platoon sergeant with the First Cavalry Division from 1967-1969. He will now join a board of 16 homeless veteran service provider executives and advocates from across the country who guide the efforts of NCHV, a national network of nearly 250 community-based organizations that provide emergency and supportive housing, food, health services, job training and placement assistance, legal aid and case management support for more than 150,000 homeless veterans each year. NCHV also serves as the primary liaison between those care providers, Congress and the Executive Branch agencies charged with helping them

succeed in their work.

Through its advocacy and leadership, NCHV has become recognized as the nation's leading authority on homeless veterans issues by several departments of the U.S. government, including the Department of Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, Labor and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. NCHV has successfully worked to help draft legislation and increase funding for homeless veteran-specific programs for nearly 15 years; and was instrumental in developing and ensuring passage of the landmark Homeless Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001, which, if fully implemented, will provide up to \$1 billion for homeless veteran service providers and programs over a six-year period.

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans was founded in 1990 by a group of veteran service providers in response to the growing number of homeless veterans who were coming into their facilities, and the lack of resources to adequately provide services for them. NCHV's mission is to end homelessness among veterans by shaping public policy, promoting collaboration, and building the capacity of service providers.

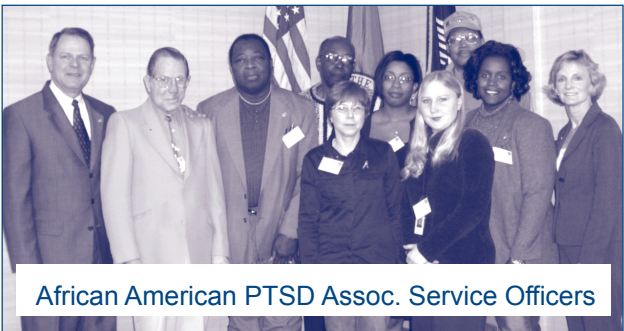
Vet Service Network Continued

Of the 115 service officers who participated in the conference, 100 gave the training content the highest rating possible.

The WDVA Service Centers will utilize this feedback provided at the 2004 conference as the foundation for planning the 2005 conference.



(L to R) Carol Rutherford, Am Legion Nat'l Service Director; John McNeil, VFW Deputy Nat'l Service Director; and Rick Hurst, VFW Nat'l Training Director were among the guest speakers and trainers who attended the Service Officers Training Conference. Christine Arnold, Director of the VA Regional Office also addressed the conference participants and appears on the right in the photos below.





Tribal Veteran
Representatives

Nationwide, Washington State has the fifth largest Native American population. Of the 36 tribes in Washington, 29 are federally recognized and 22 have designated Tribal Veteran Representatives (TVR's).

Since 1990, WDVA has been working with these TVR's in an effort to promote veterans benefits to a traditionally underserved veteran population, as well as pursuing grant options to support employment and training services for Native American Veterans.

In April 2004, the tribes reached a major milestone as they filed Articles of Incorporation with the Washington Secretary of State under the name "Advocates for American Indian Veterans", and were granted a 501C19 status to operate as a non-profit.

For additional information on this program, please call 1-800-562-2308.

Advocates for American Indian Veterans



Lucky Joe Boyd, TVR with the Colville Indian Tribe, receives congratulations from WDVA Assistant Director Alfie Alvarado-Ramos on his approval by the USDVA to receive WDVA accreditation. Boyd attended WDVA statewide service office training earlier this year, and is the first TVR to receive this honor. A TVR's role to veterans within their tribe has been traditionally different than the majority of Service Officers, requiring a new approach to application with the USDVA. Six additional TVR's attended the training, with accreditation pending.



Ten Washington Tribes attended a conference to discuss the VA Direct Home Loans for Native American Veterans Living on Trust Lands program administered by the USDVA. Facilitated by WDVA, Loan Specialists from USDVA Loan Guaranty Section in Washington, D.C., USDVA regional office in Denver, and representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Portland attended. The program, in existence since 1992, is designed to allow Native American Veterans to purchase a home on Native American land. VA is the lender, the Tribe is the guarantor and the land remains in trust with the tribe through a Memorandum of Understanding. Washington tribes have been responsible for more than 20% of the loans approved nationally.



The National Association for Black Veterans, Inc.

The History of NABVETS

Seven Vietnam combat veterans established what is now known as The National Association for Black Veterans, Inc. (NABVETS) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (1969), under the name Interested Veterans of the Central City (IVOCC).

In 1973, a reorganization brought into existence NABVETS - a membership service organization - with the charge to address issues concerning Black and other minority veterans.

On April 2, 1998, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) certified NABVETS as a national veterans service organization, and on November 1, 2001, NABVETS opened its first office in Seattle, WA.

Founder of the NABVETS Washington State Command, Raymond Miller, is a Mental Health Specialist with the USDVA Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle, and serves on the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee.



Ray Miller, NABVETS
National Service Director



Members of NABVETS recently attended the WDVA Service Officer Training Conference in Fife.

NABVETS Creed

**We are yesterday
We are tomorrow
We are earth
We are sky
We are all things:
But most of all
We are men & women
Today.**

The National Association for Black Veterans, Inc. (NABVETS)
2301 S. Jackson, Suite 103
Seattle, WA 98144
206-322-2618
FAX: 206-322-2886
rrmiller101@aol.com
www.nabvets.com
M-F 8-4

Honoring Those Who Served



Ft. Lewis Honor Guard.



Wyatt Reuter placed a flower in a vase as a tribute to each deceased resident at WVH.



The VFW & Auxiliary performed the traditional Laying of Wreaths at the Soldiers Home.

The Spokane Veterans Home hosted their third annual Memorial Day program on May 29. Cub Scout Troop #349 from All Saints school performed the color guard duties. Jim King, Retired Navy Lieutenant Commander, was the keynote speaker.

Tech Sgt. Brian Primrose, the 141st Air National Guard Outstanding Enlisted Member of the Year, read Roll Call of the home's fallen veterans over the last year.

WA Veterans Home Superintendent Jerry Towne welcomed the audience that attended the Retsil Ceremony. David Riggs, WVH Resident Council President lead the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem was sung by Jean Schenewerk.

The Governor's Memorial Day Proclamation was read prior to the Memorial Day Address by Ethan Voges, CH (MAJ) USA, Ret.

During the Roll Call, a musical interlude was played on the bag pipes by Jim Brown. As the names were read, a flower was placed in a vase as a tribute to each resident. The flower tribute was done by eight year old Wyatt Reuter.

The Ft. Lewis Honor Guard formally posted the Colors at the Soldiers Home program, and the National Anthem was played by the Puyallup Community Band.

Gus Lehnhoff, US Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Resident Gene McDonough, a US Air Force veteran, read the Governor's Proclamation. Veterans Service Organizations performed the traditional Laying of Wreaths in front of the podium.

Superintendent Jon Clontz introduced Keynote speaker Leo Hymas, a US Army veteran of World War II. Leo was a heavy machine-gun operator with the 97th Infantry Division assigned to General Patton's Third Army. A special certificate presentation was conducted recognizing the service of 47 Soldiers Home residents who were in military service during the Cold War period.

Kathleen Beechum, resident and US Army veteran conducted the Roll Call, reading the names of the 38 veterans that have passed away between May 2003 and May 2004. TAPS was then sounded.

On behalf of each state veterans home, thank you to the volunteers and community members who made the 2004 Memorial Day ceremonies truly memorable.

D-Day Memorial Wreath



Governor Gary Locke and the first lady laid a wreath at the D-Day Memorial in Normandy, France on May 30.

In The Spotlight

"Serving Those Who Have Served" takes on new meaning when the service provider and recipient share a similar background. At the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the number of employees who are veterans ranks high, providing a personal connection with clients not always achieved in other agencies.

In an effort to introduce these dedicated employees, WDVA will highlight a different veteran/employee each issue.

Debbie Williams, WDVA's accounts payable supervisor, became a civil service employee while a student at Ridgefield High School in Clark County WA.



Debbie Williams, Accounts Payable Supervisor

After graduation, she joined the U.S. Air Force and spent the next one-and-a-half years at Osan AFB in Korea, where she made liquid oxygen to support the pilots. From there, the next four-and-a-half years took her to Keesler AFB in Mississippi where she cross-trained

into production control with the Civil Engineering group.

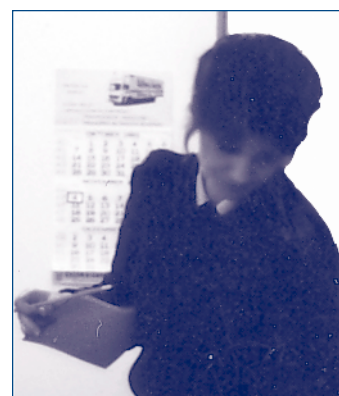
Williams last four years of the ten year enlistment took her to Bitburg AFB in Germany as the Chief of Customer Service

with the Civil Engineering Squadron, and it was during this time she decided to pursue her college degree in Accounting at night school.

A highlight for Williams during this assignment was being involved in the security arrangements for President Ronald Reagan's visit to lay a wreath at the Bitburg military cemetery there. "I never actually got to see him, but I did get to work my fanny off to prepare for him," said Williams.

Deciding it was time for a career change, Williams became a civilian, graduated from the Univ. of Maryland in Heidelberg and spent the next two years working for the Dept. of the Army in Zeiwbuchken, Germany doing Accounts Payable for Desert Storm.

From there, she spent three years in Langley, VA with Defense Finance as an Acct. Tech.



Debbie Williams, Chief of Customer Service, Bitburg AFB, Germany

1995 found her moving back home to Washington state, where for the last nine years she has been working at various state agencies.

Another really important detail - Debbie "likes to finish things", so in Oct. 2000 she joined the Washington State Air National Guard and is part of the 254 Red Horse Squadron. In case you're wondering, Red Horse stands

for Rapid Engineer Deployed Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer.

Each year, Debbie spends two weeks with her active duty component in Korea, which is responsible for heavy vertical construction (buildings), as well as her monthly duty at Camp Murray. With only six years to go to retirement from the Guard, Williams is sure she'll find another extra-curricular challenge to pursue down the road.

New Dining/Kitchen Facility Completed



The Washington State Veterans Home at Retsil celebrated the completion of its new dining and kitchen facility with an Open House on May 11, 2004. The new dining room is part of the construction of a state-of-the-art nursing facility for veterans.

Residents and staff have been transitioning toward this major milestone and on April 16, 2004, made the final move, with breakfast served in the old dining facility, lunch served picnic style with boxed lunches, and dinner prepared and served to residents in the new dining room.

"We are extremely pleased that this first phase of the construction project is complete," said Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs director John M. King. "It moves us closer to our goal of enhancing the quality of life of the veterans who have entrusted us with their care."

Thank-you Cooties!



(Left to Right) Chester Hansen, Carl Vest, Jim Trelch, Jon Clontz, John Newmaster. The Military Order of Cooties TY-E 13 of Tacoma recently donated the fabulous 42" Plasma TV hanging on the wall in the back ground with DVD/VCR player plus a very generous check for over \$500.00 to the Soldiers Home in Orting.

Motorcyclists and Veterans – Winning Team



On May 30, bikers joined together and rode from Destination Harley-Davidson in Silverdale to the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil, where residents gathered to watch more than 125 motorcycles arrive outside building 9.

The motorcyclists visited with residents and distributed more than 300 new and gently used biker theme T-shirts and hats to all interested residents. It required a pickup to deliver additional donations including 6 TV sets, 6 cases of popcorn, more than \$500.00 worth of phone cards and \$809.00 in cash to the Retsil Resident Activity fund.

Riders and residents alike shared stories and pictures of biker memories, and WVH Superintendent Jerry Towne had the opportunity to wear his leather and denim as he participated in the day on his own motorcycle.

Residents were then invited back to the dealership to enjoy a barbecue lunch, music, and hear fellow-rider Rear Admiral Select Richard B. Wren, past Commanding Officer of the USS Carl Vinson, deliver a Memorial Day Message and thank you to all veterans.

The event, sponsored by the Silverdale Harley Owner's Group #1605, was considered such a huge success that Cecil Hedrick – Chairperson for the Fred Ross Memorial Veterans T-shirt Run – announced it would be an annual event.



Sprucing Up the Spokane Home

The Gardeners of Spokane recently spent the day sprucing up the patio areas all around the Spokane Veterans Home. The group planted annuals, perennials, new evergreen shrubs in the entry to the building, indoor plants and vegetables in the raised flowerbeds for residents to grow and enjoy. Following the plantings the volunteers were treated to some refreshments provided by the home and the Resident Council.



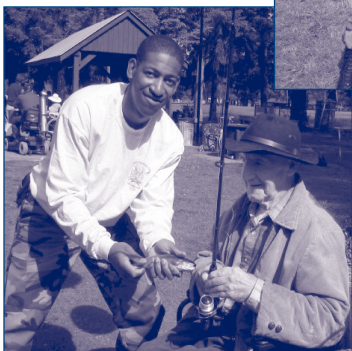
Orting Residents Hold Annual Fishing Derby

Residents of the Washington Soldiers Home are fortunate to have a small fishing pond just for them, and each spring the home holds an annual fishing derby. For the past few years, the Tacoma Harley Owners Group has come to assist with the event. They make sure the residents arrive on time and have their poles ready when the derby begins. Prizes are given for the first fish caught, the biggest fish and the most fish caught. This year the biggest fish weighed in at 7 pounds, and measured 21 & 1/2 inches long.



The residents enjoy fishing so much that the activity department schedules other groups to volunteer their assistance to provide more fishing days.

A group of Fort Lewis Soldiers who belong to the Audie Murphy Club, came in May. They did a wonderful job with getting residents to the pond, helping residents with their fishing poles and cooking up a great fish fry.



Street Talk

With the Spokane Veterans Home Residents

What do you like about the Spokane Veterans Home?

Would you recommend the Spokane Veterans Home to others?

"I like just about everything. In truth I'd rather be here than at home. I've talked to others and they all say this is the best place to be. I would recommend the Spokane Veterans Home because of the reasons I've just stated."

--Bill Fanning



"I've liked it so well for over two years that I've been here. It's my 'home' and I always want to get back whenever I'm out. I would highly recommend the Spokane Veterans Home to other Veterans looking for a place to stay."

--David Tevlin



"The main thing is that it's clean. You always see staff cleaning and there's no odor. Also the people are very nice. Yes, I would recommend the Spokane Veterans Home to anyone for the reasons I just gave."

--Frank Pascuzzi



"We get good service. The staff are great. Everyone tries to make it comfortable for me. Yes, I would recommend the Spokane Veterans Home because of the good service."

--George Hills



Spokane Veterans Home

Owned and operated by the State of Washington, the Spokane Veterans Home is a 100-bed skilled nursing facility serving Eastern Washington veterans and their spouses.

- ★ Medicaid/Medicare Certified
- ★ Physician on staff or private physician can follow you
- ★ Daily rate includes pharmaceuticals & most other services
- ★ Partnerships with local hospitals and the Spokane VA Medical Center
- ★ Medicaid resident may retain \$160 Monthly Personal Needs Allowance
- ★ Transportation to medical appointments and outings



Call (509) 344-5770 or
1-877-VETS-R-US

New VAAC Chair Elected

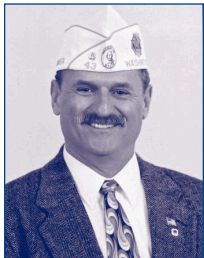


Richard Marin, Chair

The Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) held annual elections at the bi-monthly meeting held June 10 in Kennewick. By unanimous vote, VAAC members selected Richard Marin, a member at large, as Chair and William Schrier, representing the American Legion, as Vice Chair. Marin and Schrier will begin their terms in September, and serve one year.

In addition, two new appointees to the committee were made public by the Office of the Governor: David Riggs of Retsil has been appointed to represent the Washington Veterans Home and Lauren Schwisow of Olympia has been appointed to represent the American Ex-Prisoners of War. Riggs will serve the remaining two-year term of William Davis, recently deceased, and Schwisow will serve a full four-year term.

The VAAC is composed of 17 members and advises the Governor and the director of the Department of Veterans Affairs on issues and programs concerning veterans.



Bill Schrier, Vice Chair
Am Legion



David Riggs
WA Veterans Home

Veteran & Military License Plate

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is pursuing a series of specialized license plates displaying the emblems of each branch of service. This opportunity is made possible by changes in the way the State Legislature and Department of Licensing handle specialized plate requests.

WDVA needs **Your Help** to ensure the **Veteran and Military License Plate** receives approval from the State Legislature during the 2005 session!

If you are interested in purchasing a **Veteran and Military License Plate** please indicate your support by signing a Signature Sheet (2,000 individual signatures are required) available at the WDVA Olympia office or on the web site (www.dva.wa.gov). WDVA will contact you after the 2005 Legislative Session to notify you whether the measure was approved by the State Legislature.

Why Buy a Veteran and Military License Plate?

Proceeds from the Veteran and Military License Plate will be used to provide:

- ◆ Programs and services for homeless veterans;
- ◆ Memorials honoring veterans; and/or
- ◆ Maintenance of a future state veteran's cemetery.

The Veteran and Military License Plate will cost \$40 with an annual renewal fee of \$30.

For each plate sold or renewed, \$28 will be used to serve and honor veterans. (The funds will not be used to replace any current funding received by WDVA.)

Honorably discharged veterans or active duty military personnel will be eligible to purchase a Veteran and Military License Plate.

For more information, contact Heidi Audette at heidia@dva.wa.gov or (360) 725-2154.

Please mail signature sheets to:

WDVA Attn: Heidi Audette
PO Box 41150
Olympia, WA 98504

Veterans Wall of Honor Tile Project

The Veterans Memorial Museum is offering veterans and their family members or friends an opportunity to purchase a 6" by 6" tile engraved with name, rank, branch of service, years of service, plus two additional lines of information, as part of their fundraising campaign for their new 16,500 square foot facility being built at exit 77 off I-5 in Chehalis, WA.

For additional information on the museum, or to purchase a tile, call (360) 330-7913, e-mail vmm@quik.com or visit their website at www.veteransmuseum.org.



Merchant Marines Present Memorial Plaque

Bud Schmidt of the Juan de Fuca Chapter, American Merchant Marine Veterans, presented a memorial plaque honoring all the Mariners from the World War II era, to WDVA, where it will be displayed until it can be permanently placed.

VA Inpatient Directory "Opting In or Out"

When veterans are admitted as inpatients to VA Puget Sound, they now have the right under the new **HIPAA** (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) privacy rule to decide whether or not to have their names listed in the inpatient hospital directory. The inpatient hospital directory lists the name, hospital location and telephone number for each inpatient.

What happens if patients choose not to be listed? When patients request not to be listed in the directory it means that they have "opted out." What this means is that protected health information will not be given out about those patients nor will VA Puget Sound staff even acknowledge that they are in the hospital. Protected health information includes patient names, location in the hospital, patient condition in general terms and religious affiliation. It means that VA Puget Sound will not give any information to callers or visitors, including family, friends, colleagues, non- VA clergy, delivery persons (such as for flowers or cards) or to anyone asking about them.

What happens if a patient chooses to be in the directory? If patients choose to have their names listed in the inpatient directory and someone asks for inpatients by name, staff may disclose limited, general information to a member of the public regarding the location or condition of the patient and to a member of the clergy regarding religious affiliation. Staff may also disclose general health information about patients' conditions such as "critical," "poor," "fair," "good," "excellent," or similar statements to next-of-kin or person(s) with whom the patient has a meaningful relationship. Staff will not disclose diagnoses, test results or specific information about a patient's condition without a written consent from the patient specifying to whom the information may be given.

If you want additional information or have questions, please contact: Susan Helbig, (206) 277-1951 or Bobbie Smith, (253) 207-2018.
(Source: VA Puget Sound News, Spring 2004)

VA Services for Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom Veterans

Seamless Transition From Active Duty

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) are working as partners to meet the needs of our newest veterans – the men and women who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom – by creating a seamless transition from active duty to civilian life.

VA's goal is to ensure that every seriously injured or ill serviceman and woman returning from combat receives priority consideration and world-class service. Together VA and DoD are finding ways to move records more efficiently between the two agencies; share critical medical information electronically; protect the health of troops stationed in areas where environmental hazards pose threat; process benefit claims as one shared system; and, in every way possible, hold open the doors to an uncomplicated passage from soldier to citizen.

Enhanced Employee Awareness

VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi initiated an awareness campaign in August 2003 to enhance continuity of VA services for our newest returning war veterans.

Changes that followed were aimed at sensitizing employees to our newest war veterans and improving access to VA programs. Through messages on paycheck stubs, e-mails, memos, conference calls and closed-circuit television programs, Secretary Principi and his under secretaries for health and benefits have alerted field employees to be especially sensitive to the needs of our newest disabled war veterans.

VA Expands Outreach

In 2003, VA increased the staffing of benefits counselors at key military hospitals where severely wounded service members from Iraq and Afghanistan are frequently sent.

Currently, five staff members are assigned full-time and one assigned part-time to work bedside with patients at both the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC and the Bethesda Naval Medical Center in Maryland. Four of the counselors specialize in benefit programs and two are social workers who facilitate health care coordination as service members move from military to VA care.

On an as-needed basis, similar teams are committed to work with patients, discharge planners, and other military staff at three other DoD medical centers serving as key medical centers caring for seriously injured troops: Eisenhower Army Medical Center, Ft. Gordon (GA); Brooke Army Medical Center, Ft. Sam Houston (TX); and Madigan Army Medical Center at Western Regional Medical Command, Tacoma (WA).

Throughout the nation, VA officials work with military disability retirement lists staffs to identify service members from Iraq or Afghanistan for special outreach efforts. Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom coordinators at each VA benefit office and medical center coordinate with DoD discharge staff to ensure a smooth transition to VA services at locations nearest to the veteran's residence after discharge. Through this coordination, the veterans are known at the local VA facilities which process their benefits claims and continuity of their medical care, including medications and therapy, is assured.

Benefits and Services

Every active-duty service member, Reservist or National Guards member who serves in a theater of combat operations is eligible for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care for injuries or illnesses he or she believes is related to combat service for a period up to two years beginning on the date of discharge or release from service. This two-year eligibility for medical care is available even if there is insufficient medical evidence available to conclude that the veteran's illness is the result of combat service. At the end of the two-year period, these veterans have the same eligibility for VA medical care as veterans of earlier conflicts.

VA offers a spectrum of health care and benefit programs for veterans of the war on terrorism, including disability compensation, vocational rehabilitation, prosthetic services, life insurance, pension, education benefits, specially adapted housing and automobile grants, and survivor and burial benefits. Many VA services are provided at a higher priority or on an expedited basis for this newest generation of combat-disabled veterans. VA programs for veterans with a service-connected injury or illness apply equally to those who served in the regular active duty forces and to National Guard members or reservists returning from federal activation.

Additional Resources

VA has brochures and other information for veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom . VA Health Care: 1-877-222-8387. VA Benefits: 1-800-827-1000. Veterans Benefits Information: <http://www.vba.va.gov/>

Attention All Atomic Veterans

The Oregon State chapter of the National Association of Atomic Veterans is working hard to ensure that all veterans exposed to ionizing radiation while serving in the military are registered with the Ion Radiation Registry (IRR), kept by the VA Medical Centers.

Oregon's NAAV state commander, Fred Schafer, said many veterans who fit the criteria may have unclaimed benefits due, but need to be registered. In addition, the group is looking for an Washington state Atomic Vet to take the State Commander spot of Washington. If interested, call Fred at (541) 258-7453. The mission of the National Association of Atomic Veterans is to assist these veterans in obtaining government recognition and Department of Veteran Affairs health care and financial assistance. To learn more about this organization, visit www.naav.com .

Atomic Veterans include members of the United States Armed Forces who were exposed to ionizing radiation from atomic and nuclear weapons testing during the period beginning with the Trinity Blast of July 16, 1945 at Alamogordo, New Mexico; continuing through the U.S. clean-up of Nagasaki / Hiroshima; during the 235 atmospheric atomic and nuclear weapons tests in the Pacific and Nevada test sites; until the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963.

To Register with the IRR, call:

Western Washington	1-800-329-8387
Spokane	1-800-325-7940
Walla Walla	1-888-687-8863
Vancouver	1-800-949-1004

\$1,500 Scholarship Awarded by WWII Memorial Educational Foundation

The Washington state World War II Memorial Education Foundation announced Erin Nicole Rice of Spanaway Lake High School as their 2004 scholarship recipient.

The criterion for selection is based on overall grades and activities, as well as an essay on the impact of WWII on society today. Rice's grandfather, Walter Bernard Rice, served in the U.S. Navy and worked in the boiler room of the USS Arizona. One and a half years prior to the bombing at Pearl Harbor, he was transferred off the ship.

Rice will receive \$1,500 from the foundation to assist at Pacific Lutheran University this fall, where she will pursue a degree in education.

The Foundation is a registered 501(c) 3 organization responsible for the passing of Public Law Chapter 112 of 2000, which established a WWII oral history project to be used to assist the Office of the Superintendent of Public Education and educators in developing a curriculum for teaching WWII history in grades K-12. The result is an award winning video entitled "When We Were Kids, We Went to War" along with a special website for teachers and students entitled [The Voices of World War II](http://www.wwiihistoryclass.com/), which includes suggested lesson plans and ideas for interviewing.

<http://www.wwiihistoryclass.com/>



KOREAN DEFENSE SERVICE MEDAL

The 2003 NDAA Public Law 107-314 authorized the Establishment of a Korea Defense Service Medal for military personnel who served in the Korean theater after July 27, 1954. DoD has now announced the creation of the Korean Defense Service Medal (KDSM) to recognize the contributions of U.S. armed forces members who have served or are serving in the Republic of Korea. The area of eligibility includes the land area of the Republic of Korea, and the contiguous water out to 12 nautical miles, and air spaces above the land and water areas. The period of eligibility, which began July 28, 1954, is currently open-ended. Due to the extensive time period for KDSM eligibility, the nonconsecutive service period for eligibility remains cumulative throughout the entire period. The KDSM may be awarded posthumously, and only one award of the KDSM is authorized for any individual. Each military department is tasked to implement procedures concerning the KDSM and ribbon, to include application procedures. A member must have been assigned, attached, or mobilized to a unit operating in the area of eligibility and have been physically deployed in the area of eligibility for 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days or meet one of the following criteria:

- ◆ Has engaged in actual combat during an armed engagement, regardless of the time in the area of eligibility.
- ◆ Was wounded or injured in the line of duty and required medical evacuation from the area of eligibility.
- ◆ Participated as a regularly assigned air crewmember flying sorties into, out of, within, or over the area of eligibility in support of military operations. Each day that one or more sorties are flown counts as one day toward the 30 or 60-day requirement.
- ◆ Has served in operations and exercises conducted in the area of eligibility as long as the basic time criteria is met, which is cumulative throughout the entire period.

More than 40,000 members of the U.S. armed forces have served in the Republic of Korea or the waters adjacent thereto each year since the signing of the cease-fire agreement in July 1953, which established the Demilitarized Zone.

CARES UPDATE: VA Announces Changes for Washington Facilities

A new outpatient clinic in central Washington, maintaining the current mission of the Vancouver medical center and transferring inpatient beds from the American Lake VA to the Madigan Army Medical Center are part of a comprehensive plan by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to modernize its nationwide system of health care facilities.

"These changes will provide greater access to care for veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "By strengthening our network of outpatient clinics, we will bring a greater quality of care closer to where most of Washington's veterans live."

About 108,312 of Washington's 649,046 veterans were treated last year in VA's health care facilities, up from 89,433 in 2000. In 2003, VA spent \$1.5 billion in Washington, an increase from \$1.1 billion three years ago.

Secretary Principi noted that about 80 percent of the health care provided by VA is outpatient care. He said the plan would allow the department to provide more of the outpatient care veterans want and use, while building upon VA's expertise in providing highly specialized inpatient care.

The changes are part of a comprehensive plan called CARES, short for "Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services." The secretary's report on CARES can be viewed in its entirety on VA's Web site at <http://www.va.gov/CARES>.

Briefly, the secretary announced the following for Washington:

- ◆ Open a new community clinic in central Washington;
- ◆ Maintain the current mission at the Vancouver Division of VA Medical Center Portland and explore possibility of expanding Vancouver's function by relocating services from the Portland medical center;
- ◆ Study how to best provide health care to veterans in the Walla Walla community. The study will evaluate the demand for health care against availability of care in the Walla Walla community. It will consider multiple options, including partnerships with community and private sector organizations to provide nursing home and psychiatric inpatient care. VA will also consider options for moving into a more modern and efficient facility and will determine a more effective use for the current Walla Walla campus;
- ◆ Transfer 15 inpatient beds from the American Lake VA medical center to the Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, freeing up 85,000 square feet of space at American Lake to meet primary care demand;
- ◆ Replace or renovate extremely high risk seismic buildings at American Lake and Seattle; and
- ◆ Pursue a partnership with the Department of the Navy to provide acute inpatient medicine, emergency room care and possibly urology services in support of the VA outpatient clinic in Bremerton

CARES is a plan to modernize and improve VA's health care system. Among the elements of the Secretary's CARES decision are more than 150 new community based outpatient clinics, potential creation of four new - and expansion of five existing - spinal cord injury centers, two new blind rehabilitation centers, and expansions throughout VA's healthcare system that will enhance veterans' access to VA care.

In July 1999, a General Accounting Office study found that VA was diverting a million dollars a day – or \$3.6 billion during a decade – from veterans' health care to maintenance on unneeded or unused facilities. The average age of VA's more than 4,900 buildings is more than 50 years, and the need to reduce vacant space and unneeded buildings has been the focus of several reports by the General Accounting Office.

This approach to facility's management means the dollars once wasted on old and vacant buildings can be used to enhance services in the communities where health care is provided.

"CARES modernizes VA's 74-year old health care system," said Principi. "I want to emphasize that no veteran will lose health care as a result of CARES, nor will there be any gaps in their health care services."

The CARES plan was reviewed by an independent commission, which received more than 212,000 comments and held 81 site visits to VA and Department of Defense medical facilities, and State Veterans Homes, 38 public hearings and 10 formal meetings. The commission submitted its recommendations to Secretary Principi in mid-February.

(Source: U.S. DVA News Release – May 7, 2004)

Message From Secretary Principi



One of the highest priorities here at the Department of Veterans Affairs is meeting the needs of former prisoners of war. They are extraordinary men and women who have endured captivity, suffered extreme deprivation, and sacrificed their own freedom to preserve the freedom of all Americans. In recent years, VA benefits and services for former prisoners of war have been improved and expanded. However, there may be as many as 11,000 former POWs who are not receiving the benefits to which they are entitled.

I am asking you to join me in locating these veterans and inviting them to take advantage of the benefits being offered by a grateful nation. Since most missing former POWs are World War II veterans, we must act as quickly as possible to find them and their survivors.

I urge you to use the resources available to you as a VA employee and to use any available network or group in your community to assist in this outreach effort. You can help these former POWs by encouraging them to contact VA through a local/county/state veterans' service office, by calling 1-800-827-1000, or by looking at VA's POW Web site <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/POW/index.htm>.

This may be the last chance for these selfless Americans and their survivors to receive the benefits they have earned. Let's be sure they do. Thank you.

Anthony J. Principi
April 2, 2004



CHAMPVA Policy for Some Surviving Spouses Extended

An extended deadline will allow more time for some remarried surviving spouses of veterans to seek health care insurance under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA).

The extension applies to CHAMPVA-eligible spouses who remarry after a veteran's death. The surviving husband or wife lost access to CHAMPVA benefits if they remarried before their 55th birthday and before Feb. 4, 2003.

Under rules announced last March, those survivors had until Feb. 4, 2004, to apply for reinstatement of their CHAMPVA coverage. Today's announcement gives them until Dec. 16, 2004, to apply for reinstatement.

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, people must be family members of veterans who have a permanent and total service-connected disability, who died of a service-connected condition or who were totally disabled from a service-connected condition at the time of death.

In general, CHAMPVA covers most health care services and supplies that are medically and psychologically necessary.

People who want an application for this benefit or more information can contact VA's Health Administration Center at 800-733-8387.

Surviving spouses who remarry at a younger age and lose their CHAMPVA benefits can have these benefits restored if their later marriage is annulled or ends due to death or divorce. Similarly, widows or widowers of any age who lost benefits under VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) program due to remarriage are eligible for reinstatement of monthly DIC payments if their subsequent marriage ends.

This restoration policy has been in effect since 1998, but VA officials are concerned widows or widowers may overlook this benefit if a subsequent marriage ends years later. VA's average payment to surviving spouses is about \$12,720, including adjustments for minor children, survivors who are housebound or who need a home aide, and other factors.

(Source: U.S. DVA News Release – March 25, 2004)

Secretary Honors Exceptional Nurses

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi announced recipients of his annual nursing awards for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

This year's recipients are Mary Withers, R.N., Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, registered nurse award; Helen Noel, Ph.D., advanced practice registered nurse, VA Connecticut Health Care System, expanded role nurse award; Philip Cotroneo, licensed practical nurse, Lebanon (Pa.) VA Medical Center, licensed practical nurse award; Debra Warren, NA, Dayton (Ohio) VA Medical Center, nursing assistant award; George H. Gray Jr., director, Central Arkansas Veterans' Healthcare System, director's award; and Sandra K. Janzen, R.N., Tampa (Fla.) VA Medical Center, nurse executive award.

VA has one of the largest nursing staffs of any health care system in the world. Numbering nearly 58,000 nationwide, the VA nursing team – composed of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, vocational nurses and nursing assistants – provides comprehensive and compassionate care to the nation's veterans, helping them to maintain or regain health and to learn to live with disabilities.

(Source: U.S. DVA News Release – May 11, 2004)



National Cemetery Burial Locations On-line

More than three million records showing where veterans have been buried in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries are now available on-line. The innovation will make it easy for anyone with Internet access to search for the gravesite locations of deceased family members and friends.

The nationwide grave locator contains more than three million records of veterans and dependents buried in VA's 120 cemeteries since the Civil War. It also has records of some burials in state veterans' cemeteries and burials in Arlington National Cemetery from 1999 to the present.

The records date to the establishment of the first national cemeteries during the Civil War. The Web site -- at www.cem.va.gov -- will be updated nightly with information on burials the previous day.

The site displays the same information that visitors to national cemeteries find on kiosks or in written ledgers to locate gravesites: name, dates of birth and death, period of military service, branch of service and rank if known, the cemetery's location and phone number, plus the grave's precise location in the cemetery.

The information in the database comes from records of interment, which before 1994 were paper records, kept at each cemetery. VA's interment records contain more information than what is shown on the Internet and cemetery kiosks. Some information, such as identification of the next of kin, will not be shown to the public for privacy reasons. Immediate family members with a government identification card may request to see the full record of a burial when they visit a national cemetery.

(Source: U.S. DVA News Release – April 13, 2004)

Hats Off

Hats Off to KPVI

Since their inception in March of 2003, the Key Peninsula Veterans Institute (KPVI), a non-profit organization in Lakebay, WA., serves veterans, families and the communities on the Key Peninsula. They have conducted two Memorial Day services and a Veterans Day display at the Vaughn Cemetery, flying more than 200 flags to honor deceased veterans.

Last Christmas, the "Trees of Sharing" program received their full support, providing gifts to the American Lake Veteran's Hospital and Tacoma's Manor House.

In April of 2004, KPVI donated an additional \$500 of new clothing for veterans at the American Lake Veteran's Hospital.

Persons interested in joining the organization can call KVPI President Cy Young at (253) 884-4551.



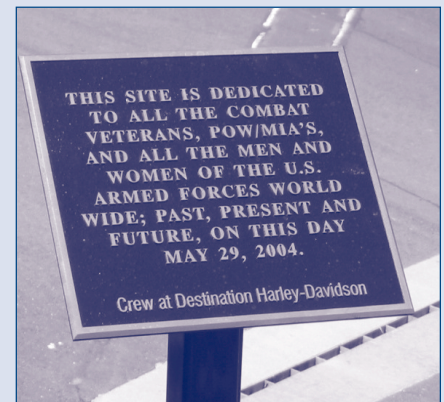
More than 200 flags fly at the Vaughn Cemetery on Memorial Day 2004, organized by the Key Peninsula Veterans Institute with the assistance of local Boy Scouts and community members.



Key Peninsula Veterans Institute member Wally Cornman presents Puget Sound Health Care System's Volunteer Coordinator Barbara Hatred with a donation of new clothing for the veterans at American Lake on April 8, 2004.

And, Hats Off to...

The Silverdale Destination Harley-Davidson, who unveiled this memorial positioned at the base of the flagpole in front of their store.



Coming Events

Vietnam Traveling Wall

July 1, 2004 – July 4, 2004

Redmond, WA

July 8, 2004 – July 11, 2004

Seven Cedars Casino

Sequim, WA

July 15, 2004 – July 18, 2004

Dairy-Berry Days

Burlington, WA

July 29, 2004 – August 1, 2004

Oak Harbor, WA

<http://www.avtt.org/schedule.htm>

360-941-2544

Bastille Day Festival 2004

July 11, 2004 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Seattle, WA.

The French-American Chamber of Commerce is looking for veterans to participate by talking with visitors about D-Day in a "60th

Anniversary of D-Day" booth, as well as a color guard to participate in a ceremony at noon. If interested, contact event coordinator Eva Zemandl at (206) 779-9457

American Legion Washington Convention

July 14-19, 2004

Doubletree Hotel

300 112th Ave SE

Bellevue, WA. 98004

[http://www.walegion.org/2004%20](http://www.walegion.org/2004%20Convention/2004%20convention.htm)

[Convention/2004%20convention.htm](http://www.walegion.org/2004%20Convention/2004%20convention.htm)

1-800-222-tree

National Association of Atomic Veterans

July 16, 2004 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Tigard Legion Hall

8635 SW Scoffins

Tigard, OR

Duane Gaddis (503) 618-8793

Keith Whittle (503) 289-2720

Fred Schafer (541-258-7453

www.trcschafer.com/naav.htm

www.naav.com

"Thanks to Them"

July 16, 2004 7:00 p.m.

Tribute to Our Military, Our Veterans &

America – Sponsored by VVA 690

Auburn Performing Arts Center

700 E. Main

Auburn, WA

Advance tickets required

Chuck Lawrence: sarge6000@aol.com

Korean War Veterans Memorial

Wreathlaying commemorating the 51st

anniversary of the Signing of the Armistice

Korean War Veterans Memorial

Capitol Campus, Olympia WA

July 24, 2004

[http://www.ga.wa.gov/visitor/Korean/](http://www.ga.wa.gov/visitor/Korean/Korean.htm)

[Korean.htm](http://www.ga.wa.gov/visitor/Korean/Korean.htm)

Chosin Few

Al Rasmussen 253-756-0493

Max Diamond 253-838-2004

Spokane Veterans Information and Assistance Fair

August 11, 2004

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Navy/Marine Corps Reserve Center

(Next to VAMC)

N 5101 Assembly Street

Spokane, WA 99205-6199

Lonnie James 509-457-2790

lonniej@dva.wa.gov

VAAC Meeting

September 9, 2004

Spokane

Cyndee Baugh 360-725-2153

cyndeeb@dva.wa.gov

Help Preserve Washington's Military Records

Secretary of State Sam Reed is preserving Washington World War I records on-line. These records include WWI serviceman cards, causality lists, photographs, and letters held by the Spokane Public Library, Washington State Archives, and Washington State Library.

The effort is part of the Historic Records Project to preserve Washington's historic records and give historians and genealogist access to Washington's genealogical material on-line. This Historic Records project began in October 2002 as part of Washington's Territorial Sesquicentennial. Records transcribed since then include territorial censuses, naturalization, vital, and military records.

Working from their home, more than 120 volunteers from Arizona to Australia are transcribing censuses, naturalization, and military records on their home computers.

To help preserve Washington's military history from your home, or for more information on the Historical Records project, please contact Andrea Watts at 360.570.5568 or awatts@secstate.wa.gov.

Search for your Washington ancestors and learn more about the Historic Records Project on-line at <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/history/>